American Missionary Association
287 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

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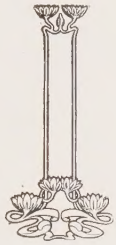

President Cyrus Northrop, LL.D.

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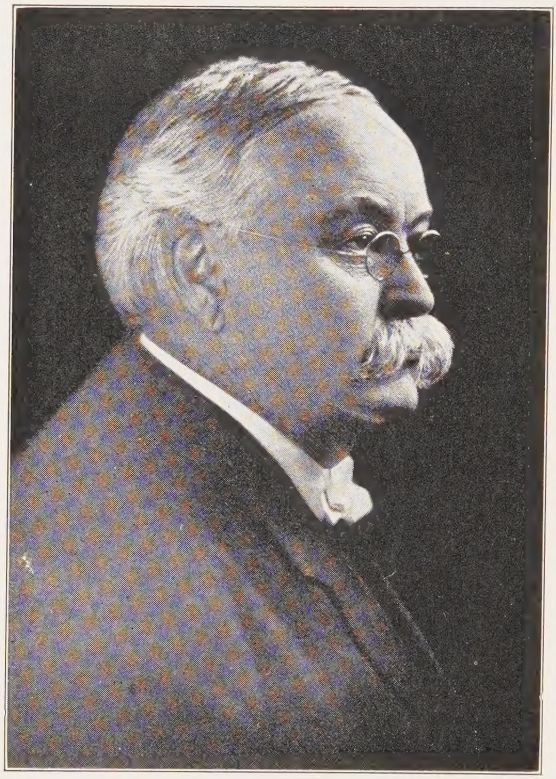

PRESIDENT CYRUS NORTHROP, LL.D.

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To educate and Christianize eight or ten millions of Negroes, whose ancestors but a comparatively few years ago were ignorant slaves, is a difficult but not a hopeless task. Many agencies both of church and state—to say nothing of magnificent individual philanthropy, are at work for the accomplishment of this task and enough has been done to assure success in due time. Among these agencies the American Missionary Association holds a most honorable position by reason of what it has done and what it is doing, having been among the first to enter upon this work when the way was opened as one of the results of the Civil War, and having vigorously prosecuted the work for a half century, with results whose influence has been felt in all parts of the country. The Association recognizing the foolishness of the attempt to build Christianity on a foundation of ignorance, has from the first emphasized educational work, and its colleges and other institutions of learning are confessedly among the best that are open to the Negro in the South; and its graduates are also confessedly among the ablest and most useful Negroes of the South. Looking backward everything we see is an inspiration to look forward and to go on with the work with perfect confidence that the coming harvest will be richer than any that have yet been garnered. The fruits that have already been gathered are enough to fill with joy the hearts of those many self-sacrificing and liberal souls who for years have been contributing of their not abounding wealth to the support of the Association—and whose faith sometimes sorely tried has yet never weakened nor failed.

Many great and good men have practically given their lives to the work of the Association, some of them as Secretaries directing the work, and others prosecuting the work in the field. Many of the latter have had to do their work in loneliness and without supporting sympathy from their neighbors, a condition which has made their faithful and efficient service often heroic. I am glad to believe that conditions are improving and that the intelligent whites of the South realize now more than ever before that education and religion are as important for the Negro as for the white man; that without education and religion neither the white man nor the Negro can be what he ought to be; and that in seeking to educate and Christianize

the Negro the American Missionary Association is contributing to the peace and order of society, to the safety and prosperity of the whites, as well as to the progress and happiness of the Negroes. There may be some clouds here and there, but there is blue sky in sight also. Consider for a moment the extent and character of the work of the American Missionary Association. That Association is a Congregational Organization. Its most important work is among the Negroes and among the poor mountain whites of the South. Its most important work is also educational. While it has established and now helps to maintain a respectable number of churches, some of them very weak indeed, but some also strong and truly shining as lights in the world—it has also established and maintained Fisk University in Nashville, Talladega College in Alabama, Tougaloo University in Mississippi, Straight University in New Orleans, Tillotson College in Austin, Texas; Atlanta University in Georgia, Piedmont College in Georgia for mountain whites, besides many secondary schools. The education given by these institutions is of a high order. These institutions are working with a most unselfish spirit. They are not seeking to increase the number of Congregationalists specially. They *are* seeking to increase the number of good men, good citizens, Christians. The Negroes are and probably will continue to be Methodists or Baptists. That does not matter. But it does matter that they should not continue to be ignorant and irreligious. To bring them out of ignorance and superstition into the light of knowledge and spirituality is a glorious work, lifting the Negroes not only into an ability to support themselves, but into the higher intellectual and spiritual life which belongs to true Christian manhood. The more of these people we can lift to a good degree of knowledge and culture and spiritual life, that will fit them to be leaders of their people, the better it will be for the race, and the better it will be also for the white race. No graduates of the A. M. A. schools ever dishonors his race or angers the white race by committing crimes; and if all the colored people were like them, the two races could live together with mutual good will. Education alone does not produce such results necessarily. It is education baptized in religion which can be depended on to produce good citizens. And it is this kind of education that the American Missionary Association seeks to give to the races whom it serves.

It would seem that the future intellectual, moral and religious condition of the ten millions of Negroes in our country, one-tenth at least of our population, must be a matter of grave concern to all patriotic people without regard to race, party, section or denomination—for these millions must be a force contributing to national prosperity and safety, or they will be a menace to our political and industrial institutions. But the great majority

of our people seem quite willing to let things drift as they will, being alike unmoved by glorious possibilities of progress and unterrified by the possibility of coming doom. "The laborers are few." They were few in the days when Jesus was here among men, and comparatively they are few even now. The work of evangelizing the world almost stands still because such a small part of even the professed disciples of Christ realize in the slightest degree the duty which rests upon them to help in the great work of discipling the world.

You can not get men to do much for any cause until they are interested in it. A large part of the church literally gives nothing for missions. Individuals and churches give perfunctorily to designated causes; but the contributions are generally small. When a man or a church really wants to have something done, they will give in such measure as to make sure that something will be done. I do not know to what extent the work of the A. M. A. interests the people of the different sections of our country; but I know that the contributions to the Association from a large part of the country are small. The Association would have little means for carrying on its work if it were not most loyally supported by the sons and daughters of the Pilgrims still dwelling in the land of the Pilgrims. I hope that the liberality shown by individuals and some churches conspicuously during the half century or more of work for the colored races may be an inspiration and an example to a great many more individuals and churches as they realize the magnitude and importance of the work to be done.

The Master said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Many a man has found this true in his experience—and the churches that devise liberal things for the world that knows not Christ, will find it true—the blessing comes back. For the missionary work, at home or abroad it does not matter which—not only carries the Gospel to people who have not known Christ, but in its successful progress, it reacts upon the home churches and does more to keep alive their faith than any other one thing. With churches in our country by the hundreds now closing for want of support, and the vigor of others largely expended in sociological experiments, the outlook for the future would not be bright, if the Gospel banner were not being carried by missionaries in triumph to large parts of the world that have never known Christianity. The Missionary Church at Thessalonica from which, as Paul said, sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia and whose faith to Godward was spread abroad in every place, becomes an inspiration and encouragement to the mother church in Jerusalem. Millions of Christian people have upon their lips daily the prayer "Thy Kingdom Come," and yet a large portion of these are doing absolutely nothing to cause that Kingdom to come. When

we get the real missionary spirit, when we really desire the coming of God's Kingdom, we shall be anxious to do what we can to hasten that coming; and we shall realize that we are the servants of Jesus who has committed to us one, two, five talents as it may be, and who expects us to give an account of our stewardship—showing that we have wisely invested the money—as we surely can, if we have invested it in the work of discipling the world and can point to nations and races enlightened and Christianized by our Christian money and work. The mission work at home and abroad is the very embodiment of the spirit of Jesus Christ. A really live church must have and will have the missionary spirit. It is a great deal better to be engaged in carrying the knowledge of Jesus Christ and Him crucified to the nations that have never heard of Him than it is to be holding solemn conclaves in our home churches over questions of doctrines, that never have been and probably never will be settled. It is immensely better for Paul to take that missionary journey from Salamis to Cyprus, through Cyprus, up to Asia Minor, to Desbe, Lystra, Iconium, preaching the Gospel everywhere as he goes than for him to stay in Jerusalem and dispute with Peter as to whether Gentile Christians ought to be circumcised. There is something inspiriting and full of hope in carrying the Gospel into new fields. There is nothing inspiriting in discussing before Christian people dogmas that have no vital relation to Christianity. Take any view you please of Jesus Christ, hold to any theory you please of the atonement, make much or little as you please of the Pauline Theology, believe any one of the multitude of creeds which have been formulated on the strength of isolated texts and have become the rallying cry of almost countless denominations, the one essential fact remains that what this world needs is to get the spirit of Jesus Christ and to show that spirit in all the varying relations of human beings to one another. And any Christian money or labor expended for what does not tend to spread abroad that spirit through the world is so much wasted. And what a vast amount of money and energy has been wasted in denominational rivalries, in establishing a half dozen churches of as many denominations in a place so small that it can decently maintain but one church, and in efforts—not to Christianize the world—but to turn Christians from one denomination to another. It is of no importance whatever that a Methodist or Presbyterian should become a Congregationalist; but it is of the greatest importance that the world that knows not Christ should know Him, should receive His spirit, and should show forth His spirit in all the future. And when we neglect missions, when we pay no heed to the Master's last command to go teach all nations and spend our energies and resources in the selfish and ambitious effort to swell the numbers

of our denominational adherents by proselyting in rival denominations we are simply traitors to our Lord.

But the fact is that almost all of us as Christians, as the men who are expected to carry on a campaign for Jesus Christ and make this world His, are half asleep all the time and neither inside the church nor outside do we begin to realize the magnitude of the work to be done, the magnificent opportunities now afforded for doing the work nor most important of all the fact that Christianity is to-day on trial as never before, and that its continued influence and blessing to our own country depends in no small degree upon our fidelity and largeness of heart in promoting the work of discipling the world—the world outside of our country, the ten millions of Negroes in our country, and the unchurched millions of whites in every part of our country. It is time for us to realize that there is work to be done—there are sacrifices to be made—the time for playing Christianity has gone by and it is high time for the Church of Jesus Christ everywhere of all denominations to gather as one army under His banner and unitedly, harmoniously, with mutual helpfulness and brotherly love, try to carry the Gospel "from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand."